DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 267 CG 015 251

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TITLE Design for Diversity: A Program Planning Grid for Student Activities.
PUB DATE Mar 80
NOTE 20p.: Paper presented at American College Personnel Association Convention (Boston, MA, March 26-28, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Environment; *College Programs; College Students; *Extracurricular Activities; Higher Education; *Needs Assessment; *Program Development; Program Evaluation; *Student Characteristics; Student Needs; *Student Personnel Services; Student Personnel Workers

ABSTRACT

This guide provides a program planning grid for college student personnel workers involved in the area of student activities. A program planning and evaluative system is proposed to address campus needs and allow greater control in planning an educationally balanced program. This system is based on an outline of topical areas to be addressed through program presentations and recognizes the existence and needs of varied subgroups of the campus population. The guidelines, presented in a grid format, concentrate on the provision of a balanced, comprehensive set of programs for the campus community, with an effort towards achieving program content goals, e.g., educational, social, political, social service, or self improvement. Suggestions are offered for adapting the grid to individual colleges, evaluating program success, and modifying activities to benefit campus demographic groups. The use of the grid for both planning and analysis is discussed as well as the value of the grid system as an initial effort for developing a method of planning and reporting the activities of professional program planners. (NRB)

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Design for Diversity:

A Program Planning Grid for Student Activities

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Jan B. Kubik

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Although many colleges give lip service to individual differences and individual development, few comprehensive programs have been designed to help everyone...The intentional student development approach seeks to meet the needs of all students, to plan change rather than react to it, and to engage the full academic community in this collaborative effort.[1]

[1] The Future of Student Affairs
Theodore K. Miller and Judith S. Prince
Jossey-Bass, 1977, p. 20.

Immediately prior to assuming my current position as Coordinator of Campus Programs, I attempted to explain my new job responsibilities to a friend totally unfamiliar with much of the current student affairs jargon or nomenclature. After briefly (perhaps too briefly, in retrospect) explaining that I would work with student organizations on planning and presenting concerts, lectures, films, and things of that sort, my friend rather succinctly encapsulated the entire student activities field (and my chosen profession) with the devastating summation: "keeping them off the streets."

In the face of this rather disappointing label, I attempted to explain that I was in fact an educator, and that while some of my effort was expended in social activities, much of my time would be devoted to facilitating and offering educational experiences which occur outside the classroom.

With this incident in mind, and as a very appropriate point of departure, I would like to propose that too many of us within the field of student activities may claim that we are "educators" yet review of our annual activity offerings would show that perhaps my friend's analysis is closer to the truth.

Style of Leadership

Within the field of student activities, there are three dominant roles involving student personnel professionals.[2] Depending on your institutional organization, budget structure, level of student involvement and sophistication, and so forth, the professional will find him/herself assuming one of these three roles in varying degrees:

Educator - in this role, the professional seeks to further the educational experiences of students, faculty, and staff, through planning and presentation of programs which confront the individual with ideas which are informative, challenging, stimulating, novel, unfamiliar. This role is also formally played through workshops, seminars, etc., usually aimed at leadership development, organizational strengthening, etc.

Entertainment Enterprise - while few will actually admit that this is what they do, many student personnel professionals primarily offer a variety of programs which compete with the other entertainment forms such as television, movies (what percentage of your film budget is mass market popular films?), concerts, novelty acts, popular lectures, etc.

Entrepeneur - in this role, the professional is usually in a difficult budget situation which forces him/her to generate revenues which in turn support additional activities. Depending on the amoung of revenue generated and its eventual applications, the Entrepeneur frequently finds him/herself in the uncomfortable position of having to be a popular success in order to have sufficient funds for other activities.

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[2]There is a fourth role, which I hesitate to mention, but must in the interests of thoroughness: Cipher. In this role, the professional does little more than draw his/her salary, much to the consternation of others working below.

[3]One of my more perceptive professional colleagues worked at an institution where the classical music series was supported almost entirely by income from its popular concerts, leading him to observe "More power to the pimples," since their most popular events were those which drew not only from the campus but also hordes of high school students from the surrounding communities thereby insuring huge financial successes.

These three dominant styles of leadership may be utilized at one time or another by the same individual, depending upon the institutional situation, specific requirements of an event, job description, budget constraints, etc.

While the ultimate role one assumes is affected by external forces, I would like to propose that if student personnel and student activities professionals are in fact educators (or perceive themselves to be), then it would follow from that assertion that we need a clarification of our central purposes and a reaffirmation of our educational role within the institution. In order to do this, it is essential that the student activities programmer clarify those values which he/she intends or hopes to convey through his/her profession. What I would like to suggest is that in order to insure that these same values are contained in the programmatic offerings of the institution, the student activities programmer will have to occasionally disregard formal research and surveys, he/she will have to ignore those democratic influences which frequently mandate popular choice, and instead of aiming for large attendance, he/she will focus on meeting the needs of the scattered minority interests found on the extremes. To ameliorate the discomfort that such an statement should undoubtedly cause, I would also like to argue that we must act like a professor in the classroom, shaping our own programming syllabus based on our specialized knowledge of an area which we wish to communicate to our passion students. [4]

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[4] I would be one of the last to deride the value of formal surveys. In fact, my own personal bias is that we do far too little methodical research within our own institutions, making budget commitments, building modifications, schedule changes, and so forth, with incredible disregard for information about our ever changing institutional populations. My reservation here is not with the surveys themselves, but with the use which is made of their results.

In many instances the results of surveys then become the sole arbiters of decisions, as if other factors should not be introduced in the discussion. We are not holding a popular vote with unit representation of a quid pro quo

4 cont.
nature; we are supposedly presenting educational experiences for the students on our campuses. And as supposed professionals, we should have some notion of the types of experience that are needed. We should utilize our formalized research information along with other facets of our professional experience and professional goals to formulate our own plan of action which takes these things into account but is not controlled exclusively by them.

A professor would not shape his/her reading list from the choices of students, and similarly, we should not let students tastes be the sole dictates of our program content. While we must be mindful of the appetites of our audience, we should not let their desires be the sole determinant of our programming, for unless we have a very unusual constituency, we will find that our programs concentrate almost exclusively on social/recreational events.

Program Planning System

What I would like to suggest is a scheme which addresses both the varied needs of the campus and allows the programmer greater control in planning an educationally balanced set of offerings.

At the heart of this program planning and evaluative system is 1) an outline of topical or programmatic areas to be addressed through program presentation and their many subdivisions, and 2) a recognition of the varied subgroups which comprise the total campus population. This two fold system then utilizes these categoric divisions to form a grid or chart as an aid in plotting the overall direction of your efforts. I should emphasize that these content categories are guidelines, and should not be so formalized as to inhibit input from other sources or specialized needs. Additionally, it should also be emphasized that these guidelines can and should be adapted to meet your own individual institutional needs, especially where you have unique resources and/or constituencies. These guidelines represent an attempt at a more balanced, comprehensive set of programs for the campus community, with a concerted effort towards achieving rough program content goals:[5]

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[5]It should be noted that it is sometimes difficult to assign a program to one distinct category, and some weighting needs to be given overlapping events. E.G. When is a film educational and when is it entertainment?

A. Educational - Includes most lectures, some films showings, concerts, dance performances, etc., where there is an overt educational component. Will probably consist primarily of lectures, panel discussions, debates, etc.

B. Social/Recreational - Consists of mixers, dances, games, sports travel, outings, etc.

C. Political - Assists activities which deal with political issues, including campus and regional issues; to aid in development of programs or groups which are aimed at solving specific problems. Funds are to be allocated on an individual basis with no guarantee for renewal. Primarily for assisting groups with initial efforts or specific problems.

D. Social Service -

E. Self Improvement - Includes such diverse activities as religion, spiritual/metaphysical exploration, physical fitness, arts and crafts, workshops.

While this system can be applied to the budgeting process, a danger inherently follows because such an approach assumes an equal cost for each program or group of programs within a category. Some types of programming are more costly than others, and to allocate budget dollars along these lines, and assume that this will result in an equitable distribution of programs will probably prove faulty.

Besides those major divisions along the program content Axis, you can also define additional types of program areas which you feel deserve attention. Again, these interest areas can be varied according to your own circumstances and resources, but expansion of program topics along a broad continuum helps to portray the entire spectrum from which you can plan your programs for the upcoming year. In this way you can try some experimental activities which complement your more traditional, middle of the road events within that topical grouping.

FIGURE 1: Illustration of Expansion of Educational Section via Lectures

Constituency Axis

Program Content Axis

Lecture Series

Politics

Women's Issues

Minorities

Media

Society (general)

Arts

Elderly

Energy

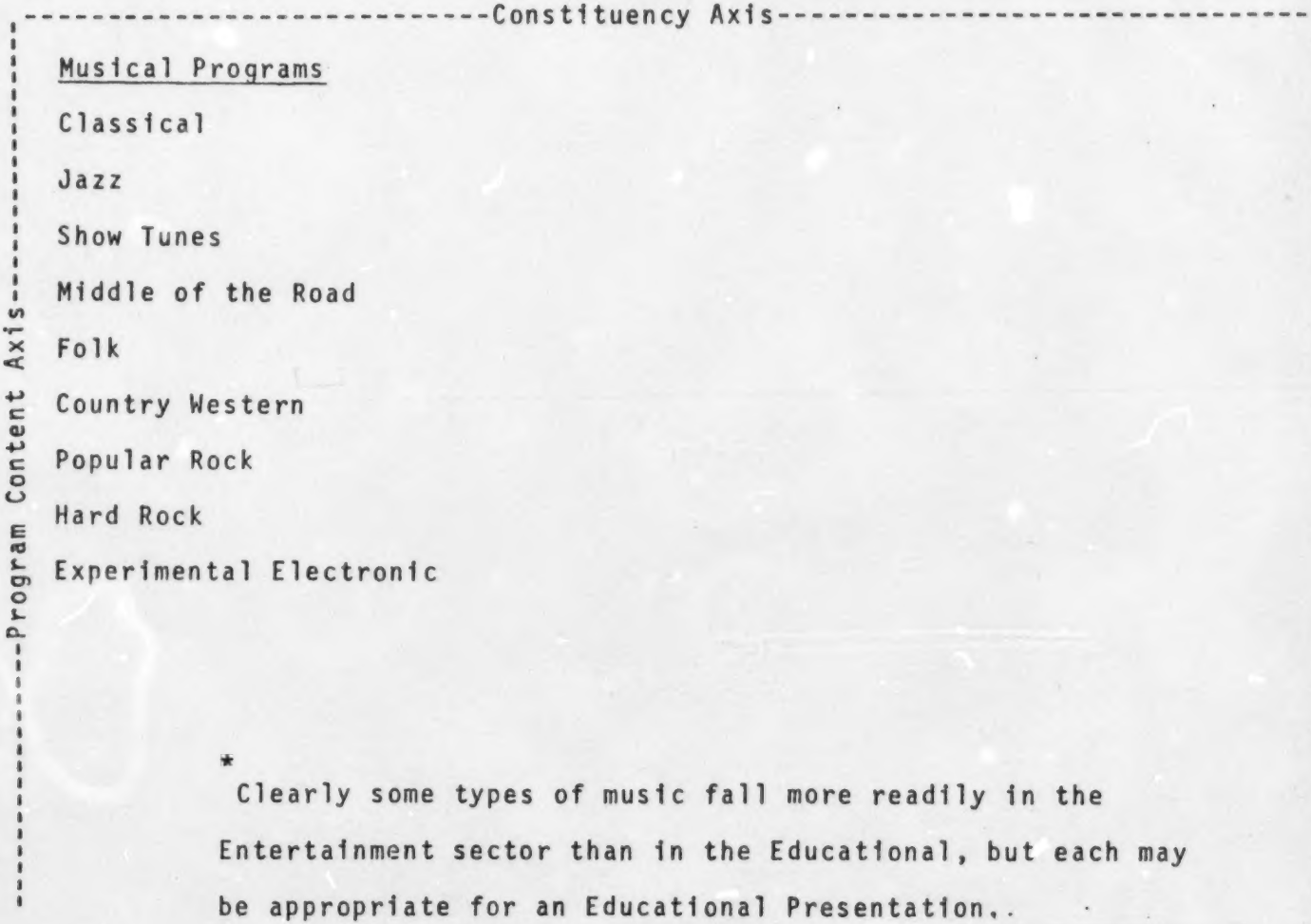
Environment

Economy

Popular Figures/Celebrities (may be more appropriate for Entertainment)

Comedy (may be more appropriate for Entertainment)

FIGURE 2: Illustration of Expansion of Educational Section via Music*



* Clearly some types of music fall more readily in the Entertainment sector than in the Educational, but each may be appropriate for an Educational Presentation..

By setting forth various general categories as guides, a programmer can plan events with reasonable confidence that a good variety will result. Through a periodic review of activities, he/she can determine the level of success in achieving these goals, and modify future plans accordingly to offer more programs within the neglected category.

Constituency Goals

A second component of this analysis is delineation of the campus consituencies. On a typical, large, heterogenous campus, we might find that there are sizable groups of students who fit the non-traditional label, yet too often our programs seem best suited for the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants of 18-21 years of age. It would be advantageous to review the institutional research at your particular university to establish some demographic goals as well. In this instance, it is important to remember that some of those groupings will naturally overlap with others, but your primary intention will be to address certain needs of particular sub-goups. For instance, a thorough programmer should remember that in addition to the WASP, 18-21, population he/she might also offer programs designed with the needs of minorities, older students, evening students, women, graduate students, handicapped, etc., and plan accordingly.

Besides breaking down your campus along regular demographic lines, you should also identify other campus groups or sub-groups which inter-lock within these demographic groups. By this, I mean that you should also attempt to identify those particular sets of sub-groups such as Women, Graduate Students, Evening Students, Faculty/Staff, Commuters, etc., which are also sub-sets of the whole population, reflecting their own characteristic demographic breakdowns. In this manner, you can be more responsive to the needs of populations which are distinct and perhaps different from the larger set. A campus population may change radically after three p.m., and your programming should take these changes and these varied sub-groups into account, if you wish to be truly attentive to the whole population.

An illustration of how this might be done is shown on the Constituency Axis of the grid system in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3:Sample Constituency Axis

Program Axis	Constituency Axis														
	Traditionals			Evening			Graduate			Women			Faculty/Staff		
	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	White	Blacks	Internat.

Dual Application of the System

This grid system is helpful in two ways: planning and analysis. In the planning phase, where you have the luxury of anticipating those events which you'd like to schedule for the upcoming year, this system proves quite useful as a target for a wide but balanced variety of programs. After you establish those categories which you feel are most important for your campus, you can then begin to plan and schedule appropriate activities to fill those cells. In an era where desires far exceed financial resources, this approach allows you to insure that some of the more important goals or targets are met, through advance scheduling of activities which cater to these particular areas of concern. If you have unlimited resources, this system also allows you to more equally distribute your efforts across the gamut in whatever pattern you deem worthwhile.

As a tool for analysis, this same system then provides a good indicator of your success in adhering to your pre-conceived pattern of distribution. If you find that after all that careful planning during the summer months, you have had to respond to crisis after crisis, delivering new programs at the bequest of other groups and offices, you now have some means of assessing the overall impact of all your programs (both planned long in advance and as a response to an immediate need). If you find that because of external factors, you have failed to achieve those pre-conceived distributional goals, then you can redirect or modify your plans for the forthcoming semester to insure that the voids are filled. Or, if you have experienced varied degrees of success in specific areas of the grid, you might then modify your strategy for that particular sector. For instance, if your Open College Mini-Courses have been the primary thrust for your self-improvement activities and you don't feel it is working as you'd hoped, you might then try some one shot seminars focused on topics which are of specialized interest and appropriate for such treatment. In this manner, the grid can help redirect your efforts by helping suggest categories of weakness

which require more effort and attention.

At the end of the year, your follow-up report similar to the one shown in Figure 4 could be used to indicate the overall scope and direction of your programming.

Figure 4: Sample Annual Assessment on Grid

Constituency Axis

Traditionals			Evening			Graduate			Women			Faculty/Staff				
Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Whites	Blacks	Internat.	Program Content Axis	
															EDUCATION	
x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Energy Panel	
x	x					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Election Issues	
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Art Lecture	
															SOCIAL/REC	
x	x	x					x	x	x	x					Dance	
x						x			x						Hayride	
x		x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	Theater	
															POLITICAL	
x		x				x		x	x		x	x	x	x	Iran	
x	x					x		x	x			x			Environment	
															SOCIAL SERVICE	
x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Blood Drive	
															SELF-IMPROVEMENT	
			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				Tenant's Rights	
			x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	Income Tax	

Another factor which merits consideration when assessing the overall value of a system such as this, or any system for that matter, is the actual cost per program per person. While many of the social/recreational programs have a high per dollar cost, you can easily fashion a panel discussion, seminar, workshop, etc., for little cost beyond publicity by drawing upon the resources within your university community. Many local personalities and specialists are quite willing to visit campuses and some are even flattered to be given a forum for their ideas. You can do a great deal of educational, political, and self-improvement programming for very little money, and the value of these programs can far outweigh many more costly programs which draw larger audiences. The emphasis should not be on attendance alone--a good program can affect one person--and we need to create a variety of situations which allow students to interact informally in situations which help to draw them out. An individual can be alone in a crowd, but it is hard to blend into the woodwork in a room with only a few people, and I would contend that it is in just such a situation that one can experience a great deal of thought, reflection, and even introspection.

After carefully adhering to a format of this type, you will no doubt find that some events are more readily attended than others. In the face of huge turnouts for social events and mere handfuls for others such as poetry readings, income tax workshops, and the like, frustration will no doubt set in and there will be a strong temptation to abandon a balanced approach in favor of pleasing the masses. It is at this moment of doubt that the student personnel professional need ask him/herself exactly what role he/she wishes to play in the institution. If success in terms of numbers takes precedent over other values such as education, confrontation with new ideas, stimulation of thought, etc., then this individual can abandon the framework with a clear conscience, and resume the role of social director.

The more difficult task is to continually adhere to this model in the face of low attendance, reaffirming your commitment to an educational role through programming. At some point you will have to consider whether your experience is the result of your own efforts or if the problem lies with your client population. If the masses continually call for "Bread and Circuses" and your true commitment is to play an educational role, then alternative plans of action must be considered. At the same time, I would encourage you not to overlook the merits of "little victories." By this I mean programs which go well, even if for only a small number of individuals. All the parties from our collective past blur into one, but most of us can recall a special speaker, a unique experience, a workshop, a brief encounter which retains importance for us, and it is this sort of "little victory" which can sustain us throughout seemingly discouraging sessions.

The grid system may not be a clear criteria which objectively reports on our final efforts, as a profit/loss ledger, a winning per centage, or indices of sale might, but in the absence of any other methodical reporting system, this grid seems to be a good beginning effort towards some method for planning and reporting what we do as professional programmers:

It allows us to plot goals for the year, particularly in content areas.

It acknowledges the varied constituencies which comprise our campus communities.

It is flexible enough to be adapted and utilized on almost any campus.

It allows the institution to establish those goals which it feels are most important, so the annual report can objectively state "This we set out to do," and "This is what we have accomplished."

And, it clearly states that there are several areas of education (or entertainment) which we wish to address, and accentuates those which the institution, office, or professional considers most important.

Properly applied and adhered to, this system provides colleges with a system which recognizes individual differences and attempts to establish a comprehensive system to program for many of those differences, serving the means and the extremes, the traditionals and the non-traditionals, while planning the direction of changes throughout the years. It is hoped that through use at several different institutions, through criticism, modification, and continued application, this system will help us become more professional about the education which we attempt through our programs.